

Bodin's analysis of the influence of physical environment upon society and politics was no doubt the most systematic treatment of the subject, though not original as is usually believed.

Ibn-Khaldun (1332-1406), a Muslim historian, philosopher and sociologist was the first to point out that history is not merely a recording of episodes but "a science tracing the origin and development of civilization". His most important contribution in the field of sociology was his interpretation of the historical process which in sharp contrast to the static conceptions of the contemporary Christian historians was dynamic and revolutionary. He has put great emphasis on the cooperation of psychic and environmental factors in this process of historical development.

### SOCIAL THOUGHT IN EARLY MODERN TIMES

Montesquieu was most prominent thinker of 18th century and is regarded as one of the founders of "rational politics." In 1748 he published *The Spirit of Laws*, which is considered his greatest work. Montesquieu presented his carefully accumulated facts into *The Spirit of Laws*. "Very few dogmatic generalizations found their way into his work. Perhaps the distinguishing feature of the book is the number of practical suggestions offered to law makers." (Barnes, p. 64). His underlying idea was that laws, customs, and institutions are the product of geographical conditions particularly climate and that what might be suitable to one people would be quite unsuitable for another.

The important contribution of Edmund Burke (1729-97), an English political philosopher and orator, was his resolute statement of the corporate unity of society. He bitterly criticised the rationalistic political philosophy of his time and asserted that the creation of governments is not a matter of pure reason but of historic growth and long political experience. However, his conception of history was not dynamic: History, according to Burke, was a sort of instrument for defending existing institutions and resisting social change.

The romanticist writers such as Burke, Hegel and Fichte rejected the ideas of rationalistic writers who had given intellectualistic interpretations of the origin of society and the state. On the contrary, the romanticists insisted that social institutions, government and religion etc. are the internal out-growth of an organic evolutionary development with the result that more attention was given to the social and cultural foundations of social institutions — a distinctly sociological approach.

### THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

The Industrial Revolution was the most important development which had so far taken place in human history. It completely transformed the social system of the western world and led to a number of plans of social and economic reconstruction. Though originally these plans of social reform were based on human consideration but in due course of time, a good number of scholars of social problems became convinced that if social reform was to be meaningful it must rest upon a "science of society." Professor A. W. Small in his "Origins of Sociology" has frankly admitted the inter-relation between the early social reform movements and the rise of sociology.

Saint-Pierre was the first to suggest clearly that man's future lies in his own hands. Likewise, the French Economist, Turgot believed that if progress is to be made speedy and certain, a comprehensive science of social progress for the guidance of man in planning for the future should be worked out by the experts.

Saint-Simon (1760-1825) forestalled the main theoretical postulates in the sociological system of Auguste Comte. "If one substituted the word 'sociology' for the term 'science politique', used by Saint-Simon with practically the same connotation that Comte gave to 'sociology', then Saint-Simon may be said to have formulated Comte's chief theses, though even he himself only collected and systematized the doctrines current at the time." (Barnes, p. 73). In his progress of social reform, Saint-Simon proposed to organize society under the control of industrial experts, who were to direct production with a view to bringing prosperity to the society at large. The industrial experts, in turn, will help social scientists who would provide new information.

Auguste Comte (1798-1857), worked out a comprehensive system of sociology in the 18th and early 19th centuries. But his indebtedness to Saint-Simon, Hume, Kant and Turgot cannot be denied. He derived from Hume and Kant, his leading doctrines as to causation and positivism in method: Saint-Pierre, Montesquieu, Turgot and Saint-Simon had emphasized earlier the need of a basic science of sociology to act as a guide for political theory and practice. "There was, thus, little that was original in the theoretical content of Comte's system of sociology; his main contribution was to integrate and to give a comprehensive and systematic form to some of the most important social theories which were current in his time." (Barnes, p. 75).